

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EMMA C. BERRY

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: EMMA C. BERRY

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Greenmanville Avenue

Not for publication:\_\_\_

City/Town: Mystic

Vicinity:\_\_\_

State: CT County: New London Code: 011

Zip Code: 06355

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: \_\_\_

Public-State: \_\_\_

Public-Federal:\_\_\_

Category of Property

Building(s): \_\_\_

District: \_\_\_

Site: \_\_\_

Structure: X

Object:\_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_

\_\_\_

Noncontributing

\_\_\_ buildings

\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ Entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic:	Agriculture Transportation	Sub:	Fishing Facility Water-Related
Current:	Recreation & Culture	Sub:	Museum

**7. DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification: N/A

Materials:

Foundation:	N/A
Walls:	Superstructure: Wood
Roof:	N/A
Other:	Wood

**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

The wooden-hulled fishing sloop smack, *Emma C. Berry* (official number 7971), is a museum-restored, fully rigged, floating exhibit vessel.<sup>1</sup> *Berry* is owned by Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., and is berthed in the Mystic River on museum property. She lies near the schooner *L. A. Dunton*, the steamboat *Sabino*, and the whaleship *Charles W. Morgan*, all National Historic Landmarks. *Berry* is an early representative in the group of vessels on the museum waterfront which demonstrate the evolution of New England whaling and fishing vessels from 1841 to 1926.

**PRESENT CONDITON AND APPEARANCE**

The smack *Emma C. Berry* was built in 1866 in Noank, Connecticut, by James A. Latham at the R. & J. Palmer shipyard, a well-known yard that began building sloops and schooners, and continued to launch barges, schooner barges, railroad car floats, and dump scows, as well as other vessels, at an ever increasing rate. Some 800 vessels were built in Noank between 1784 and 1919. Noank, a village six miles downriver from Mystic Seaport, was a research station for the U. S. Fish Commission until the commission moved to Wood's Hole. The Commission's research vessel, *Grampus*, was built at the Palmer yard. "The village or town is a small but very enterprising place." Records indicate that at least 100 sloops were built there between 1793 and 1866, the year of the *Berry's* launch.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Merchant Vessels of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office).

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Collins, "Report of the Commissioner for 1887," U. S. Fish Commission, Part XV (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office); U. S. Fish Commission Report, Sec. II, Subsec. B-104: "The Fisheries of Stonington, Mystic and Noank," For the year 1880, published 1887; Wm. Peterson, *Mystic Built* (Mystic, Connecticut: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1989).

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*Berry's* registered dimensions are 39.2 feet in length, with a 14.6-foot beam and a 5.7-foot depth. She is registered at 10 net tons.<sup>3</sup> Her overall length is 46 feet. She was built for John Henry Berry--who named her for his daughter--on the lines of typical Noank smacks used for mackerel seining and jigging from Montauk to Cape Cod. Her lines, which were not altered during her 130 years of use, are those of a traditional Noank smack, praised by maritime historian Howard I. Chapelle:

Noank, Connecticut, won fame as a smack-building town, first large sloops, and after the Civil War fine schooners, and in the 1870's the Noank schooner-smack was considered the finest of the type.<sup>4</sup>

*Berry* was built and has been restored with materials traditional to the Palmer yard: white oak keel, frames, and deck beams; yellow pine planking; white pine decking; locust trunnels; and Douglas fir spars. Hackmatack and white oak knees give strength to the hull and to the white pine deck. Restored to her original configuration, *Berry* is a wooden-hulled sloop, fitted with a wet well, topmast, bowsprit, designed for fishing under sail from Noank east to the banks and the islands, and for carrying fish and lobsters alive in the well west to Fulton Market in New York. She carries three cotton canvas sails roped jib topsail.<sup>5</sup> She did, and will again, also carry a gaff topsail. All running rigging is manila; hemp lanyards are rove through lignum vitae dead eyes; the shrouds are of hemp.<sup>6</sup> All of the manila rope was manufactured by the Plymouth Cordage Company, a portion of which is now a Mystic Seaport museum ropewalk exhibit.

*Berry's* deck is laid out with a foc'sle hatch, well hatch, cargo hatch, aft cabin with a companionway, and a tiller. The top of the cabin trunk is fitted with a small scuttle for loading stores. Below decks the vessel is completely painted and ceiled, with a well amidships and cabin bulkhead aft. The carved billet head, trail boards, and the elliptical stern decoration are distinctive features of the southern Connecticut coast smacks.<sup>7</sup> *Berry* was without power until a Knox gas screw engine was installed in 1916. Later, another engine was added, but in 1931 all power was removed.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Merchant Vessels of the United States*.

<sup>4</sup> Howard I. Chapelle, *The National Watercraft Collection* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1960).

<sup>5</sup> Sails built in the traditional manner by third generation Australian sailmaker, Donald Lucas, in the Mallory Sail Loft, Mystic Seaport Museum. Interviews regarding the making of these sails by Gary Adair and Nancy d'Estang, museum archives. Gore plans by Mr. Lucas, Ships plans department.

<sup>6</sup> Dimensions and material for the standing and running rigging calculated from information supplied by Noank historian, Robert Palmer of the Noank smack *Ellen Gallagher* (1855).

<sup>7</sup> Original billet head and trail boards were accessioned into the museum collection, and replicated. Stern decoration photo reference: "New York and Connecticut Smacks, Fulton Market" in the Chapelle collection at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, and the Albert Barnes collection at the Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia, and photos of *Mary E. Hoxie*, in the Scholfield collection, Mystic Seaport Museum.

<sup>8</sup> F. Slade Dale, "Old *Emma* Comes to Barnegat," *Yachting* (June/July 1933); Correspondence from previous owners Milton Beal and F. Slade Dale located in the duPont Preservation Shipyard files, Mystic Seaport Museum.

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In 1886, *Berry* was rigged as a schooner for ease of handling by a smaller crew. In 1894, sold down-east, she was used with the well as a lobster carrier until 1924 when the well was removed and she carried assorted cargo. Registered in Maine until 1929, she was purchased by F. Slade Dale in 1931 for use as a pleasure vessel in Bay Head, New Jersey. He had her partially rebuilt and registered in Philadelphia in 1935. In 1966, she sailed to Noank to celebrate her 100th birthday, and in 1969 was donated to Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc.

From 1969 to 1971, the first phase of the restoration was completed at Mystic Seaport. The museum restored her original sloop rig; renewed the stanchions, covering boards and bulwarks; renewed rotted frames and floor timbers as needed; and restored the wet well.<sup>9</sup>

The acquisition of an important collection of *Berry* photographs in 1986, the remaining original construction plans of related vessel types, research from Noank historians, models, and Smithsonian records were used as the basis to complete a second, more complete restoration in 1987-88.<sup>10</sup>

In 1987-88, the museum's shipyard restored the white pine deck, resulting in the typical Noank smack deck layout with the deck framed with knees on each deck beam. The 1930-40s yacht-like deck furniture was removed. A proper rudder box, the horn timbers, the oak jib hanks, and the spar ironwork were restored and traditional sails built—all by the duPont Preservation Shipyard staff in museum facilities. In 1992, she sailed from the museum down the Mystic River, passing her birthplace in Noank, into Fisher's Island Sound—the first time she had sailed these waters under sloop rig in 106 years."<sup>11</sup>

*Emma C. Berry* is now in excellent condition, exhibited with the black hull, oiled deck, white topmast, slushed spar, and buff deck structures as documented for her type. Documentation for this appearance includes contemporary paintings by Elisha Baker; the sketch books of Reynolds Real; and an unpublished manuscript by Edward Knapp, who wrote, "*Rattler* was the first smack painted black. Up to her day all were painted bottle green. The *Rattler* set the style and all eventually followed."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Restoration of the original sloop rig based upon Noank sloop historic photographs by Scholfield in the Mystic Seaport Museum archives, nos. 59.848.13; 77.92.349; Other references for restoration include *Manhattan and City of Havana* in Chapelle's *The National Watercraft Collection* and Willits D. Ansel, *Restoration of the Smack Emma C. Berry*.

<sup>10</sup> The 1987-88 restoration referenced Noank smacks *Mary E. Hoxie* (1867), *Manhattan* (1850), *Red Wing* (1860), *Phebe* (1876), *Ellen Gallagher* (1857), *Jennie* (1872) and *City of Havana*, built in 1877 on the lines of the Noank smack at Key West, and documentation in the duPont Shipyard Research and Documentation department, Mystic Seaport Museum; Nancy d'Estang, "Reconsidering the *Emma C. Berry*," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Summer 1990).

<sup>11</sup> d'Estang, Nancy, "Handbook for the Shipyard of the Restoration of the *Emma C. Berry*," Mystic Seaport Museum Manuscripts Department, 1992; d'Estang, Nancy, ed., "The *Emma C. Berry* Under Sail," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Winter 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Edward Knapp, "The Smacks of Noank," Mystic Seaport Museum manuscripts department. (*Rattler* was built by R. & J. Palmer in Noank in 1855.)

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide:    Locally:   

Applicable National

Register Criteria:           A X B    C X D   

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions):               A    B    C    D    E    F    G   

NHL Criteria:               1, 4

NHL Theme(s):           XII. Business

                                  A. Extractive or Mining Industries

                                  5. Fishing and Livestock

                                  XIV. Transportation

                                  B. Ships, Boats, Lighthouses, and Other Structures

Areas of Significance: Architecture (Naval)

                                  Maritime History

                                  Industry (Fishing & Coasting)

                                  Transportation

Period(s) of Significance:   1866-1924

Significant Dates:           1866

Significant Person(s):       N/A

Cultural Affiliation:         N/A

Architect/Builder:           James A. Latham, builder

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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.****SUMMARY**

The sloop smack *Emma C. Berry* is the last known surviving American smack. *Berry* was built in 1866 by James A. Latham at the Palmer Shipyards in Noank, Connecticut. She is the sole example of what was once a popular fishing vessel type designed to keep the catch alive until reaching port in an internal "wet" well. This vessel type was built in the Noank area but used extensively as far north as Maine and as far south as Key West and Galveston. Imitating a successful design, many smacks were built in other regions following the Noank model.

This statement of significance is based on the more detailed discussion that follows.

Built in 1866 at Palmer Shipyards, the sloop smack *Emma C. Berry* is the last known surviving American smack. She is an example of the typical and once numerous sloop and schooner smacks built on the southeastern coast of Connecticut. Robert (Deacon) Palmer's establishment was the largest shipbuilding facility in the United States by 1896 and a leading yard for building smacks. Palmer and James A. Latham were at one time partners in the Noank shipyard known then as "Palmer & Latham." However, at the time *Berry* was built, Latham, a well-known boatbuilder who had launched his first vessel in 1831, had formed his own company. He built the *Berry* on the Palmer property.

*Emma C. Berry* is the Noank vessel type described by Chapelle as

...having a sharp entrance, a long and fine run, moderate sheer, straight keel with some drag, raking stem rabbet with long head, raking post... steeply rising straight floor, a high easy bilge... little tumble home above... flush deck... the well was amidships... designed to sail fast... deep-draft clipper model.<sup>1</sup>

In 1866, the New London *Daily Star* commented

"Our fishermen are turning their attention to the looks of their vessels as well as their utility. The vessels that have been built here [Noank] for the past five or six years look more like small yachts or pleasure boats than fishing smacks, and just now this port boasts of some very fine looking vessels."

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<sup>1</sup> Chapelle, *The National Watercraft Collection*. Describes the Noank-like *City of Havana* and *E.L. Lowe* and the Noank-built *Manhattan*.

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The exact evolution of these smacks is not clear. One can, however, be certain that they evolved from more bluff-bowed smacks and later, probably from those built in New York State. Sloop smacks *Pronto* and *Viva*, designed by William H. Webb and launched at New York City in 1842, suggest the derivation.<sup>2</sup>

### Wet Wells

Before ice became a practical medium for preserving fish aboard ship in the 1840s, there were few alternatives for getting "fresh" fish to market. The most efficient approach was to build a water-filled compartment on board in which fish would remain alive after being pulled from the sea. These compartments were called wet wells, and historians refer to "well smack," "wet smack," and "smack" when talking about vessels fitted with them. "Smack" is the common term in southern New England for a vessel with a well. G. Brown Goode of the U.S. Fish Commission used "smack" to define boats "generally above 5 tons measurement" and "built either with or without wells."

The earliest reference known to us is of the remains of a beautiful double-ended smack in the Museum of Ship Archeology at Ketelhaven, Holland. Those remains date from the 1500s.<sup>3</sup> Most references, however, indicate that in the western world, smacks are of seventeenth-century Dutch origin (the word "smack" is also Dutch), although a quote from a Bergen, Norway, newspaper reads:

One of the most interesting models (in the U.S. Fisheries Commission section of the International Fisheries Exposition 1898) is that of the fishing vessel [40, long] *Sparrow Hawk* since it is the earliest fishing smack in America of which there is a model. It was a small vessel which was wrecked in Cape Cod 1626... An American shipbuilder took careful measurements of all its parts and the model was made from these.<sup>4</sup>

The Orient may have used welled vessels much earlier, but the leading Western scholar of Chinese vessels, C. R. G. Worcester does not trace their history. Swedish, English, and Dutch welled fishing vessels are drawn in Chapman's *Architecture Navalis*, published in 1769.<sup>5</sup> Peter Kalm confirmed that smacks were in use in New England in the eighteenth

<sup>2</sup> Drawings in the Yarnall Collection, New Jersey Historical Society. Sloops 45 feet, on deck; 14-foot, 19-inch moulded beam; depth 6 feet, 6 inches.

<sup>3</sup> Leslie Gifford, "Durch Treat, The Netherlands People Share Their Maritime Heritage", *The Log of Mystic Seaport*, (Summer 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Dispersal of the models at the close of an exhibition varied: some were sold or given to the host city; some given to the Smithsonian; some became the Smithsonian's "1876" exhibit in D. C., that group recently dismantled, loaned, and stored; a large collection of the Fish Commission material was stored in the "9th St. Annex", D. C. but later dispersed to unrecorded locations. Location of this model is unknown. d'Estang correspondence, shipyard files.

<sup>5</sup> G.R.G. Worcester, *The Junks & Sampans of the Yangtze* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1971). Primary source in English; Frederick H. Chapman, *Architecture Navalis Mercatoria* (1769 reprint, New York: Edward N. Steemer Co.)

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century: "They (lobsters) were, therefore, continually brought in great well boats from New England [to New York]."<sup>6</sup> While the literature contains information about early smacks in New England, the details of Noank smacks, which were registered in Stonington, Connecticut, do not exist before 1841 because the earlier Customs House records were destroyed.

Noank author Edward Knapp referred to a statement by Professor Baird of the U.S. Fish Commission that the coast off Noank and New London yielded as high a number of quality fish as anywhere along the New England coast.<sup>7</sup> Local smacks were involved in this highly competitive and lucrative fisheries business, not only supplying local markets, but carrying live fish to the markets in New York, at least as early as 1795.<sup>8</sup> By 1803, some smacks had expanded their range to serve the markets of Charleston and Savannah during winter months.<sup>9</sup> Later, Key West became an important connection.<sup>10</sup> In the 1884 report, George Brown Goode wrote that the "smacks may be divided into two classes: those built in Connecticut and those built at Key West in imitation of New England fishing vessels." Local smacks in the south fished there in the winter months, established the red snapper industry between Key West and Havana, salvaged stranded ships in the Keys, and carried ice and freight.<sup>11</sup> Often they were sold there and the type replicated (i.e., *City of Havana* and *Emma L. Lowe*).<sup>12</sup>

Although *Emma C. Berry* was not involved in the southern fisheries, many of her contemporaries were, as demonstrated by the enrollments for Key West, Pensacola, Tampa, Savannah, Charleston, and Galveston.<sup>13</sup> Well-known Noank and Mystic names are found in the records of these ports-*Latham, Wilbur, Berry, Davis, Morgan, Fish, Sawyer, Packer,*

*Chesebro, and Mallory*.<sup>14</sup> While generally only vessels over 100 tons were enrolled and

<sup>6</sup> Peter Kalm, *Travels in North America*, revised and edited by Adolph B. Benson, (New York: Dover, 1966).

<sup>7</sup> Edward Knapp manuscript, "The Smacks of Noank."

<sup>8</sup> Peter Kalm, *Travels in North America*.

<sup>9</sup> *Resolution Log*, Cliff family papers, Manuscripts department, G. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum.

<sup>10</sup> David Baumer: "1880 Census of the Key West/Havana market... imported 71% of the fleet from Connecticut and New York... 29% was built in Florida." John Goetsch, shipyard volunteer, wrote that Noanker "Claude Chester claimed in 'The Sea; Noank: From the Papers of Claude M. Chester' that more than 60 smacks from the Noank fleet cruised from Nantucket Shoals to the Florida Keys."

<sup>11</sup> Pensacola Entrances, 1885, Record Group 36, National Archives, Washington, D. C.; David Baumer stated, "Southern New England fishermen first voyaged to the Florida reefs to wreck and supply the Havana market with live grouper and snapper."

<sup>12</sup> Listed on the model itself and in "National Watercraft Collection" by Mitman as *John W. Lowe*, by Chapelle as *E.L. Lowe* and *Emma W. Lowe*. The correct name appears to be *Emma L. Lowe*, built in Key West. Carole Heinlein in "Capt. John Lowe, Jr. Was Pioneer in Maritime Industry" said *E. L. Lowe* was built for John Lowe, Jr. for \$20,000 in *Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal* (Spring 1993); U.S. Fish Commission report XII: "Noank engaged almost entirely in fishing... large numbers of smacks... some employed in fishing off Florida Coast in winter."

<sup>13</sup> Researched in the National Archive records in Washington, D.C. and Fort Worth, Texas. Memos shipyard file.

<sup>14</sup> Record Group 36, National Archives, Washington, D.C. d'Estang memos, Shipyard files. *Mystic Journal*, October

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many documents are missing, the records of the schooner *Mary E. Hoxie* are representative of the movement of Noank smacks. She was enrolled in Stonington, Connecticut, 1868 through 1873; Key West in 1874; Stonington, 1874 through 1880; Pensacola, 1890 through 1906; Tampa, 1906 to 1920; and sold to Cuban flag 1920. During this period, the Key West Entrances list cargo of "live fish" and "ballast."<sup>15</sup> Pensacola entrance records of 1880 to 1885 list eleven local smacks (under 45 tons), indicating a pattern of arrival in Pensacola during early winter, departure for Stonington in the spring, and trade with Galveston.

By the 1820s, demand in New York and Boston for live lobsters increased as the supplies in southern New England declined. That presented an opportunity for the competitive smackmen of southeastern Connecticut and Long Island to enter the Maine market, buying lobsters from coastal pounds, or fishing for them themselves, and delivering them live to the growing city populations. By 1835, Maine legislated against smackmen from out-of-state by requiring a permit. The \$100 yearly permit purchased by Captain John Smith, [from Waterford, Connecticut], "gave Smith the exclusive right to take and ship Harpswell lobsters, a task that would keep six smacks busily occupied... the hundred dollars... equivalent to five thousand lobsters."<sup>16</sup>

Some local sloops of *Berry's* size ranged farther afield. Nathaniel Palmer discovered Antarctica in the sloop *Hero*; *Energy* and *Relief* fished one season off Valparaiso, Chile, before returning home.<sup>17</sup> In the late 1850s, five smacks sailed to the California gold fields, then turned to freighting fresh fruit and vegetables from Tahiti to San Francisco.<sup>18</sup> The International Fisheries Exhibitions of the late 19th Century included models of welled vessels from various countries which were described in their exhibition catalogues.

Most of the information regarding the local smacks was generated by the U.S. Fish Commission during the years they had a station in Noank. In Noank, H. C. Chester was commissioned to

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1865: "John Berry's smack... went down to Charleston." *Stonington Mirror* 12 November 1874: "Noank notes. Vessels schooner smack AMOY, Captain John Knapp, sailed Nov. 7 for Charlestown fishing. Schooner smack *Dauntless*, Winthrop J. Douglas, sailed November 10th for Cedar Keys for fishing, Schooner smack, Benjamin Latham, on the ways, preparatory to going south." 19 November 1874: "Mystic River and vicinity... Mr. Charles H. Packer and family have gone to Key West, a favorite winter resort for Mystic people." Key West newspaper micro film for years 1818, 1829, 1831, 1835, 1873 as researched by Albert Barnes included: Noank smacks *Loretto*, *Evergreen*, *Dauntless* involved in wrecking; 1840s to 1880, red snapper fishing; *Estella* built Noank 1877, fished out of Galveston, later Mobile. d'Estang interview 2 February 1987, shipyard file.

<sup>15</sup> *Mary E. Hoxie*, Official Number 17579. Schooner smack built by R. & J. Palmer for John Berry, 1867 Noank. Records compiled from Record Group 36, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Photograph Pensacola Historical Society. Shipyard files.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth R. Martin and Nathan R. Lipfert, *Lobstering and the Maine Coast* (Bath, Maine: Maine Maritime Museum, 1985); Records in the Northeast Archives of Folklore indicate that a 361 Maine lobster sloop with well had a cargo capacity of 3000 to 3500 pounds. Reference Information Sheets nos. 7540064 and 7540021.

<sup>17</sup> A portion of *Hero's* logs are in the Smithsonian collection, the others privately owned; *Forest and Stream*, 3 April 1897.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Maynard Drake, "Jack Wilbur and the Return of the Noank Boats" *Wooden Boat* (March/April 1986).

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build models for expositions in the United States and Europe in which the U.S. Commission participated.<sup>19</sup> His welled smack plank-on-frame model built for the 1880 Berlin exposition was essential to the 1987-88 restoration of *Berry's* deck framing. That model was purchased by the Bergen, Norway, Stiftenlsen Fiskerimuseet in 1880 to be artifact No. 4 in their collection, and was borrowed from them for research by the museum shipyard in 1987.<sup>20</sup>

The smack's well, in which seawater circulates through large holes in the bottom planking to keep fish and lobsters alive, is not a tank fitted into the hull, but is a part of the structure of the hull. It was reported that the U. S. Fish Commission deposited unpublished documents regarding wells at the Smithsonian, but those have never been found. The Commission, however, published a complete description of box well construction in Captain Collins's report on the research schooner *Grampus*. That is the most complete description known.<sup>21</sup> Her well was a "box well with pyramidal form, the apex at the deck." Although offered as an improvement on existing designs and built to Fish Commission specifications, it may reflect vernacular practice-the Noank shipwrights had long experience building wells. The box well was built with full-width athwartships bulkheads from the keel to the height of the well bed logs, then the ends of the well inclined and tapered to reach the deck at the well opening. Another type of well, called the "deck well," had a deck laid over the well bulkheads with a trapezoidal "trunk" extending to deck level.<sup>22</sup> The well restored to the *Berry* in 1969-71 is a box well, referencing *Grampus*, *Manhattan*, and *City of Havana*.<sup>23</sup>

Customs House records list from two to six crew members onboard the smacks. It is thought that *Berry* would carry a crew of three, normally paid in shares. The burst of economic growth in Connecticut around 1866 assured a ready market in the towns along the coast for fresh fish and lobsters, and in part accounted for the evolution of the sloops to schooner rigs. The competition encouraged the buying of larger boats to go greater distances and follow the seasonal fishery. A rare account of smack fishing from 1844 to 1846, describes a probably typical situation: "In the spring... a crew of two and a boy... we caught 500 or 600 weight [of halibut] the first day out... we made \$100 to a share."<sup>24</sup> Then they were engaged in the mackerel net fishery, then cod and hake until September. A larger sloop

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<sup>19</sup> H. C. Chester was first mate on the *Polaris* exploration of the Arctic, Noank boatbuilder and model maker, and member U.S. Commission of Fisheries; Exhibition inventories from the Oceanographic Institute Library, Wood's Hole, Massachusetts, the John Hay Library, Providence, Rhode Island, and the G. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum.

<sup>20</sup> Lines and construction drawings by R.C. Allyn, no.202; replica model by William Quincy, no. 89.56; Eric Ronnberg/d'Estang/Froiland correspondence 1986 to 1988; photo collection; "1880 Noank Smack model Arrives From Norway", *The Windrose*, August 1987. Mystic Seaport archives.

<sup>21</sup> *Grampus* well construction: the U.S. Fish Commission Report of the Commissioner, 1887, Part XV.

<sup>22</sup> A well-smack employed on George's Bank 1836-1847, sketched by Capt. J.W. Collins, Sec. V of the U.S. Fish Commission's "History and Methods of the Fisheries," 1887.

<sup>23</sup> Nancy d'Estang and Kevin Dwyer. Extracts from in-press manuscript, Mystic Seaport Museum shipyard.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix of Sec. III, "The Fishing Grounds of North America", published 1887 by the U.S. Fish Commission.

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was bought [*Lt. Sawyer*, a Noank smack of 33 tons] which carried a crew of five. The first of January they went fishing for cod; in the spring to Nantucket Shoals for halibut and home for mackerel, letting "the smack out to a man who carried the fish to Boston... got a quarter for carrying them. During the winter we had carried to Boston 3,999 cod which weighed 51,263 pounds, and we stocked \$734.18. In the spring we caught 2,205 cod and stocked \$240.43." And then "two of us took the smack and took two loads of lobsters to New York..." For part of the summer season, many of the smacks were engaged in swordfishing in the waters around Block Island.<sup>25</sup>

To get from shore to the moored smack, and for towing in order to work the inshore fisheries, the smackmen used "sharpies"--a local term used for these particular skiffs. The sharpies were built with either two or three planking stakes, the flat bottom rising slightly fore and aft, the stem and transom raked, and thole pins to keep the oars in place. It appears that H. C. Chester built a model of the Noank "sharpie" for the U. S. Fish Commission, later given to the Smithsonian, but that model disappeared from the Smithsonian collection file prior to 1922.<sup>26</sup> *Berry* will be exhibited with a sharpie built to plans derived from historic photographs of the Noank waterfront, Noank historians, local boat builders, and Reynolds Bealls sketches.<sup>27</sup>

On the larger scene, the big schooners replaced these smacks carrying iced fish in giant holds. By the 1920s those in turn had been replaced by crude-oil engine-powered otter trawlers, the eastern-rigged draggers. Locally, gasoline-powered lobster boats with wells (quite different from those in Maine), and the western-rigged draggers otter trawling replaced the small smack and dory fishing schooner hand-liners. Burdensome steam power did not catch on with the smackmen of Noank, although the first steam-powered smack was built there in 1890, by Robert Palmer & Son, for a dealer in Rockland, Maine.<sup>28</sup> Mystic Seaport Museum's *Emma C. Berry*, along with later fishing vessels *Breeze*, *Wallace B.*, and *Florence*, illustrate the local evolution--the welled vessels *Breeze* and *Wallace B.* built in

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<sup>25</sup> Photographs in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society and the Block Island Historical Society which include Noank smacks rigged for swordfishing in the old Harbour at Block Island 1870s.

<sup>26</sup> Noank sharpie model USNM 4409, later USNM 24752. Correspondence, shipyard file.

<sup>27</sup> Plans by Larry Jacobsen, December 1993, ships plans department. Reference photograph collections Scholfield, Newbury, Bates, Mystic Seaport Museum. Interviews shipyard files.

<sup>28</sup> The smack *Grace Morgan*, 491. Northeast Archives of Folklore Lobster Smack Information Sheet No. 7540021.

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Noank.<sup>29</sup> *Florence*, built in Mystic in 1926 by the respected yard of Franklin G. Post, was originally powered with a Lathrop engine--the Lathrop engine company almost next door to Post, on the Mystic River.<sup>30</sup>

Although the smacks of southeastern Connecticut carrying fish and lobsters alive in wells have disappeared, their place in the history of New England is secure. The beauty of the smaller smacks continues to grace the Noank waterfront where new near-replica Noank sloops can be seen today.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Breeze*, built 1898 by Morgan. *Wallace B.*, built 1953 by Robert Whittaker.

<sup>30</sup> Western-rigged dragger, *Florence*, built Mystic, 1926. Walter Ansel, "The Dragger *Florence*," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Winter 1985). Nancy d'Estang, "Handbook for the Shipyard of the Restoration of a Post Dragger." Mystic Seaport Museum manuscripts department and *Come Aboard The Draggers*. (Stonington, Connecticut 1958). (New York: Viking Press, 1950). "*Florence Joins The Fleet*", *Wind Rose* July/August 1983 shipyard files. Cap'n Ellery Thompson, *Draggerman's Haul*.

<sup>31</sup> *Chapelle*, *National Watercraft Collection*. Noank Sloop model USNM 26809. *Winsome* built from model photographs for Robert P. Anderson. Borrowed by Mystic Seaport Museum; lines and construction drawings by Robert C. Allyn; correspondence shipyard files. *Jeff Brown*, USNM 76258, built by Captain "Jack" Wilbur, now owned by the Noank Historical Society. Photographs and interviews, shipyard files.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (Part of Mystic River Historic District/Ref. #79002728)
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property:           Less than one (1) acre.

UTM References:     **Zone   Easting   Northing**

A 19   251850   4582740

Verbal Boundary Description:

All that area encompassed within the area defined by the extreme length and breadth of the vessel.

Boundary Justification:

The entire vessel area is encompassed within the boundary.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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Date:         9 February 1994

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY  
Designated October 12, 1994